

Message Text

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21

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 891

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2361

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, PINT, JO

SUBJECT: ISRAELI VIEW OF RECENT WEST BANK EVENTS

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 427, (B) TEL AVIV 2199

1. DCM AND EMBOFF DISCUSSED RECENT WEST BANK DISTURBANCES AND EXPULSION OF WEST BANK POLITICIANS WITH COL. DAVID FARHI, POLITICAL ADVISOR TO GEN. ORLY, IDF COORDINATOR OF ACTIVITIES IN THE ADMINISTERED AREAS.

2. FARHI DESCRIBED DISTURBANCES AS RESULTING FROM CLEVER MANIPULATION BY PALESTINIAN NATIONAL FRONT (PNF) OF COURT RULING RE JEWISH PRAYERS ON TEMPLE MOUNT. HE underscored emotional and unifying aspect of temple mount question among west bank arabs, but said that fact that no israeli minister publicly criticized the magistrate's ruling on january 28 until one week later facilitated pnf effort to exploit issue. farhi added that contributing factor was government decision

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TO EXPROPRIATE ARAB LAND IN GALILEE IN ISRAEL PROPER, HE SAW A DEFINITE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN RAKAH REACTION TO EXPROPRIATION
(REFTEL B) AND PNF ACTIVITIES ON WEST BANK, ALTHOUGH
HE HAD NO FIRM EVIDENCE OF COORDINATION.

3. FARHI SAID HE EXPECTS WEST BANK TO REMAIN RELATIVELY QUIET FOR SOME PERIOD BARRING UNFORESEEN EVENTS. HE POINTED OUT THAT EVEN DURING DISTURBANCES 60,000 WEST BANKERS OR NEARLY ALL WHO HELD JOBS IN ISRAEL, CONTINUED TO REPORT FOR WORK. HE ALSO CITED FACT THAT 176 CANDIDATES HAD FILED FOR APRIL 12 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ON FIRST OF THREE-DAY FILING PERIOD AS EVIDENCE THAT WEST BANKERS DESIRE ELECTIONS TO PROCEED AS PLANNED. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT ELECTIONS WOULD IN FACT BE HELD, FARHI WAS LESS DEFINITE THEN OTHER ISRAELI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN IN PUBLIC, SAYING THEY WOULD BE HELD "IF ALL GOES WELL" BETWEEN NOW AND APRIL 12.

4. FARHI ADMITTED THAT THE TIMING AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EXPULSION OF TWO WEST BANK LEFTIST POLITICIANS ON MARCH 27 WERE UNFORTUNATE. HE INSISTED THAT THE EVIDENCE JUSTIFYING EXPULSION MUST HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY CONVINCING OR ELSE A MAN OF THE STATURE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL BARAK WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED IT. AS FOR THE CHARGE THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO INTERFERE WITH THE ELECTIONS, FARHI COUNTED THAT IF THAT WERE THE CASE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE EXPelled FAHD KHAWASMEH FROM HEBRON, WHO IS A MUCH STRONGER CANDIDATE AGAINST MAYOR JA'BARI THAN IS DR. HATSHI WHO WAS EXPelled. LATTER HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO FARHI, IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL FRONT AND WAS ENGAGED IN CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF INTIMIDATION AIMED MORE MODERATE CANDIDATES.

5. COMMENT: FARHI RETURNED TO THE IDF IN JANUARY AFTER THREE YEARS' ABSENCE. IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS HE HAD PLACED MORE EMPHASIS ON ANDHAD SHOWN MORE UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY FOR THE GRIEVANCES OF WEST CONFIDENTIAL
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BANK ARABS AND ON THE NEED OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THEM. HIS FOCUS ON THIS OCCASION ON THE MANIPULATIVE ROLE OF EXTREMIST ELEMENTS MAY REFLECT A DESIRE TO STAY WITHIN MINISTERIAL GUIDELINES ON A SENSITIVE ISSUE.
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